



Corporation of the Municipality of Temagami

Memo No.
2015-M-086

Memorandum to Council



Staff



Committee

Subject:

Staff Training on USTI System

Agenda Date:

December 10, 2015

Attachments:

RECOMMENDATION

BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council receive Memo 2015-M-086 regarding Staff Training on USTI System; AND FURTHER THAT Council authorize and direct staff to arrange for Councillor Koski to provide training on the USTI financial system by means of a project-oriented consulting contract, strictly for the purpose of education and training of staff; AND FURTHER THAT the contract is to clearly state that the consultant is not to perform any administrative tasks or make any administrative decisions, only to provide education and training to staff.

BACKGROUND

The Municipality's Treasurer has been away on sick leave since mid-October. The Municipal Clerk, who was previously appointed by Council as the Deputy Treasurer to perform the statutory duties of the Treasurer in her absence, along with other staff including the CAO, the Accounting Clerk, and casual administrative staff on a part-time basis, have been performing the essential functions of this position.

As we are now approaching the year-end and budget time, the workload in the finance department is becoming increasingly heavy, as it always does this time of year. The municipality's financial computer program is an old, cumbersome system and the staff who are currently filling in have not been sufficiently trained to use it to its full potential in generating reports and running specific processes that are only done once or twice a year. This naturally means that it takes longer to figure out how to do tasks before performing them. This presents an additional burden to staff who are also helping to cover for the two other vacancies in the office.

It has been suggested by some members of Council that the Municipality would benefit from the assistance of Councillor Koski, a current member of Council, who was a former municipal employee and has substantial experience in working with this system and knowledge of how it works. Provincial legislation, however, prohibits members of Council from also being employees of the municipality. Specifically, Section 258 of the Municipal Act states that employees are not eligible to be elected to **or to hold office** as a member of Council. Temporary, part-time and contract employees all fall under the definition of employees in provincial legislation (Employment Standards Act). The Municipal Act also extends this ineligibility to those who are not employees, but hold an administrative position in the municipality (i.e. this would include a contractor doing an administrative function). (For clarity, this ineligibility does not extend to a contractor performing an operational contract.) Furthermore, Section 259 of the Act states that the office of a member of council of a municipality becomes vacant if the member becomes disqualified from holding office under section 258.

Staff have discussed this concern and would strongly advise against having a member of Council perform any administrative functions, even to fill in on a temporary basis to assist with the current staff shortage. However, staff acknowledge that it might be possible to use the available expertise for the purpose of training current staff to better utilize the USTI system, thus assisting

them to become more efficient and productive. It seems reasonable that a consultant engaged on a specific, project-oriented contract, strictly for the purpose of education and training of staff, would not be considered to be an employee or to be holding an administrative position. It would have to be clear in the contract that the consultant would not be performing any administrative tasks or making any administrative decisions, only providing education and training to staff. If Council deems it desirable to follow such a course of action, then Council should pass a resolution to give clear direction to staff in this manner. Staff would then be responsible to ensure that Council's direction is followed.

Should Council deem that having a member of Council as a consultant to train staff on the USTI system would not be desirable, it is possible to get training assistance over the phone from USTI.

At this time we have a heavy workload as noted above, and a growing backlog of tasks due to staff shortages. Therefore, additional training for staff on our financial system would be beneficial regardless of the anticipated return to work date of our Treasurer.

Prepared by:

Reviewed by:

Elaine Gunnell, Municipal Clerk	Patrick Cormier, Chief Administrative Officer